Utilization of information of GSI and IBM

1386. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the information provided by the Geological Survey of India and the Indian Bureau of Mines is not fully utilized;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to ensure full utilization thereof?

THE MTNISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (c) Geological Survey of India (GSI) carries out regional mineral exploration including exploration for coal and investigations of societal needs (e.g. earthquake, landslides, environment, engineering geology etc.). GSI generates information on airborne geophysical anomaly analog maps-namely, magnetic, electromagnetic and spectrometric (Potassium, Thorium, Uranium and Total Count). The Coal Wing of GSI produce geological reports for regional exploration of coal, lignite and coal bed methane (CBM) in the coalfields located in different parts of the country. Customized data packages and geological reports are also prepared by Coal Wing to aid in allotment of the blocks/sectors to public/private bidders for CBM exploration.

Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) is a national repository of varied types of information on mines and minerals in the country. IBM collects information on mining geology, ore beneficiation and environmental studies, preparing mineral maps with forest overlays and National Mineral Inventory of mineral resources. The same are provided to various Government agencies (at National, State and District level), public sector undertakings, private entrepreneurs, research & development and educational institutions, mining industry and prospective entrepreneurs.

With the enunciation of the National Mineral Policy in the year 1993, the mineral sector has been liberalised for private sector participation and the various reports and information available with the GSI and the IBM on mineral exploration are utilized both by private sector and Government agencies depending on the needs arising due to demand for any specific data.

With a view to ensure easy accessibility to the data, GSI maintains a website *i.e.* www.gsi.gov.in, which provides salient information on maps, reports and publications. GSI has also launched its own Portal which has the capability to search for information on various aspects like geological information, nature and price of maps, publications, information on priced and unpublished reports, selected information on economic deposits. GSI reports are also made available to the concerned State Governments or Central agencies with scientific evaluation of the subject and recommendations. The data maintained at IBM is available on sale at a nominal price.

Allotment of mining leases

1387. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Government have been given powers u/s 11 (2) and 11 (5) of Mines and Mineral Development and Regulation Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) to grant

prospecting licences/mining leases out of turn/on preferential basis, with prior approval of Government;

(b) if so, the details in this regard, with the names of applicants, who have been given mining leases during the last one year; and

(c) whether Government is considering any proposal to amend the provisions of MMDR Act, to ensure that allotment on preferential basis is fair and evaluation of capabilities are considered under MMDR Act on merits, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) As per Section 11 (5) of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), the State Government may, for any special reasons to be recorded, grant mineral concession to an applicant whose application was received later in preference to an applicant whose application was received earlier. However in case of minerals mentioned in the First Schedule of the MMDR Act, prior approval of Central Government is necessary.

(b) Details of prior approval conveyed by Central Government to State Governments from 1.4.2006 to 31.3.2007 are given below:—

SL No	Name of the applicant	Mineral	Area/village/district/State	Date of approval
1.	M/s Gopani Iron and Power (India) Pvt. Ltd.	Iron	153.09 hects., Surjagad Wooria Hill, Bhamragad range, Etapalli tahsil, Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra.	1.6.2006
2.	Shri Dharmendra Dubey	Manga-nese	5.00 hects, village Mansakara, district Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.	29.6.2006
3.	M/s Shivalika Minerals	Manga-nese	8.00 hects., village Mansakara, district Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.	24.7.2006

(c) Provisions already exist under Section 11 (3) of the MMDR Act, 1957 for fair evaluation of capabilities on merits while granting mineral concessions.

Foreign investment in gold and diamand mining

†1388. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that a target has been fixed for inviting foreign investment for excavation in gold and diamond mines;

(b) if so, the details of time limit fixed for this purpose; and

(c) the details of conditions fixed for encouraging the foreign mining companies for this investment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) and (b) The Government has not fixed any target or time limit for inviting foreign investment for excavation of gold and diamonds in the country.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi